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Statement submitted by Women's Board Educational Cooperation Society, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is being issued without formal editing.

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Statement

From the work we carry out in rural areas, it is obvious that there is still a lot of work to be done in the area of providing quality primary education in most rural places in Nigeria. The schools are mere shacks, there are no textbooks nor teaching materials and the teachers are not motivated and lack dedication.

The quality of education is still poor and even though school enrolment has increased there is still a lot of work to be done for the rural children to enjoy quality basic education. The need for education is greatly felt with the gap growing more and more between the educated and non- educated. One of the reasons for this gap is that quality basic education is yet to get to the rural populace.

There is a need to make basic education accessible to every citizen. There is also a need to improve its quality and ensure that it provides the right foundation and exposure for human development.

Basic education should therefore be regarded as a human right and no one should be denied of such a right. In this vain, it is important that government should put in place mechanisms that will pursue this objective. Nigeria, like most African countries, allocates only an insignificant percentage of the budget to education. With such poor funding, most government educational programmes are centered in the urban and sub-urban areas while the rural areas are not favored.

Government should include as part of their policy on education measures to ensure safety of schools. This need is especially highlighted by the recent terrorist incidence in Chibok, a rural settlement in north-eastern Nigeria. Route to schools should be safe and the schools themselves should not only be safe but attractive, clean and portray a true learning environment. Government should improve primary school infrastructure and recruit well-qualified teachers.

These objectives should go hand in hand with encouraging and removing different cultural, social or economic prejudice that lead to low enrolment in schools.

We need to keep up a better pace in tackling problems that hinder quality basic education in Nigeria especially in the rural areas. These problems should be tackled decisively in order to attain sustainable development.